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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-25 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Applicant cancels claim 1, amends claims 2-10 and adds claims 12-25.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 2-4 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 5 was objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) for allegedly being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant has amended claim 5 so as to further limit the subject matter recited in claim 2. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 7 and 8 were objected to for containing various minor informalities. Applicant has amended claims 7 and 8 to correct the minor informalities noted by the Examiner. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 1, 5-7 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hickernell (U.S. 6,201,457). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickernell in view of Wadaka et al. (U.S. 5,789,845).

Applicant has amended allowable claims 2-4 to be in independent form including all of the features of base claim 1. In addition, Applicant has canceled claim 1, amended claims 5-10 so as to be dependent upon allowable claim 2, and added claims 12-25 which depend upon allowable claims 3 and 4.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 1, 5-7 and 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hickernell and the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickernell in view of Wadaka et al. are moot.

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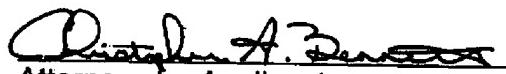
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 2-4 are allowable. Claims 5-25 depend upon claims 2-4, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claims 2-4 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

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